THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAP. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The allocation under the Action Plan to fertilizer units along the HBJ pipeline was increased from 5·76 MMSCMD in 1993-94 to 6·45 MMSCMD in 1994-95.

**Steps to Enhance Participation of Private Oil Companies in Exploration Activities**

516. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether private oil companies are given loan on concessional terms for exploration of oil;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that these companies are not making a good headway in exploration of oil;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed for active and full participation of private companies in oil exploration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The companies with whom contracts have been signed are making progress as per schedule.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) To give further boost to oil exploration by private companies, the Government of India is shortly launching a Joint Venture exploration programme between National Oil Companies (ONGC/OIL) and private oil companies.

**Failure of ONGC to extinguish oil well fire**

517. SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL:
SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Internationally acclaimed fire fighter Neil Adams has blamed ONGC for an inordinate delay to tame the blow out at the Pasarlapudi--19 gas well in the East Godavari district even after the 46th day of the flare up as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 23rd February, 1995 under the caption "US expert blames it on ONGC";

(b) if so, who are the officers responsible for this inordinate delay and whether it is a fact that the required/relevant equipment was not made available to team of Mr. Adams with the result that the work for the digging of a relief well has yet to start at Pasarlapudi which in all probability would not be taken up;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the loss to the exchequer on account of fire is much more as it is one of the biggest which the US expert has ever encountered and much bigger than anything he handled in Kuwait or at Komarada in Andhra Pradesh in 1995; is so, what are the figures of total losses on this account till date and time likely to be taken to cap the well; and

(d) what steps Government have taken use far to overcome the inherent flaws in ONGC's management structure so as to deal in effectively in such an emergency situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, the claim made by Mr. Neal Adams is not correct.